

## Future Floating Campsite Demand and Capacity

Oroville Facilities Relicensing  
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- Current Supply - There are currently 10 floating campsites anchored in several coves on Lake Oroville.
- Current Demand - As reported in Relicensing Study R-7—*Reservoir Boating*, the floating campsites received high levels of use during the recreation season, with particularly high occupancy rates during the summer months of June, July, and August. Percent occupancy during weekdays and weekends was approximately 74 percent and 79 percent respectively during the recreation season. During the months of June, July, and August (2002), percent occupancy rates were even higher at 90 percent, 94 percent, and 86 percent respectively by month on weekdays and 94 percent, 93 percent, and 90 percent respectively by month on weekends.
- Projected Demand - As reported in Relicensing Study R-12—*Projected Recreation Use*, future demand for camping in the study area is estimated to be moderate, while future demand for boating is estimated to be high. The estimated annual change in demand is 1.1 percent for camping and 1.8 percent for boating. Assuming demand for floating campsites is related to demand for both camping and boating, it is estimated that annual demand for floating campsites will increase by at least 1.5 percent at a minimum. The actual annual change in demand may actually be higher though, as Lake Oroville is the only regional recreation area that provides floating campsites.
- Projected Need if No Constraints - Assuming that demand for floating campsites increases by at least 1.5 percent annually, it is estimated that between 6 and 10 new floating campsites would be needed by 2050 to accommodate all anticipated peak season weekend demand. This estimate should be qualified by recognition that floating campsites are inherently low in number (10 existing), and even a doubling of sites is likely to generate additional demand and use levels consistently close to capacity, based on these facilities' apparent popularity.
- Constraints to Consider - Additionally, this estimate does not take into consideration several constraints that likely limit the number of floating campsites that could potentially be placed around Lake Oroville. These constraints include the following, among others:
  - *Lack of suitable coves*—there are some locations around the reservoir that could potentially accommodate new floating campsites. However, the placement and anchoring of floating campsites is a complex undertaking that involves consideration of bathymetry, prevailing winds, and other

physical and engineering parameters. As such, there are a finite number of suitable locations for additional floating campsites. While suitability studies were not completed, DWR estimates that very few additional locations could accommodate floating campsites based on the placement of the existing floating campsites.

- *Only one maintenance boat*—currently there is only 1 maintenance/pump-out boat that is dedicated to servicing the floating campsites. The boat is currently being used to capacity with the 10 existing campsites. If additional floating campsites are provided, a new maintenance boat, including appropriate staff, will likely be needed.
- *Use fees*—recently (summer 2004), the price for using a floating campsite was raised to \$100. In the mid-1990s, when fees were also higher, percent occupancy was lower at the floating campsites. Generally, when user fees are increased, there is a resulting decrease in visitation. However, it is estimated that visitation will return to pre-fee increase levels 2 to 3 years after the initial fee increase, once visitors have become accustomed to the higher fees. This trend has been identified and quantified at multiple USDA Forest Service recreation sites (Loomis and Walsh 1997).
- Conclusion - Currently, it is estimated that at least 3 new floating campsites could be accommodated on Lake Oroville based on potentially suitable locations for new moorage sites. This is the stated need based on what we know today and with input from DPR. If DWR, based on further engineering analysis, determines that additional floating campsites are feasible and are in continued high demand in the future, the number of new floating campsites and associated moorage sites may increase. However, an additional support boat and other costs also need to be considered to justify the additional operations and maintenance costs.